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FROM: R.T. KENNEDY
TO: COL. GUAY

DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

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NOVEMBER 24, 1972

TO: COLONEL GUAY
FROM: DICK KENNEDY
TO: GENERAL HAIG
FROM: DICK KENNEDY

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72 NOV 24 AM 10:56
WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

SITUATION ROOM

THE PRESIDENT REQUESTED FOLLOWING MESSAGE BE DELIVERED IMMEDIATELY TO DR. KISSINGER.

NOVEMBER 24, 1972

TO: HENRY A. KISSINGER
FROM: THE PRESIDENT

I HAVE CHECKED TODAY AS TO THE ATTITUDE OF THE LEADING DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS WHO SUPPORT US IN THE SENATE ON VIETNAM. IN PREPARING THEM FOR THE CONSULTATION WHICH MUST TAKE PLACE ONCE AGREEMENT IS REACHED WE HAVE INFORMED THEM OF THE KEY PORTIONS OF THE OCTOBER 8 AGREEMENT--THE RETURN OF OUR POWS, A CEASEFIRE, AND A FORMULA UNDER WHICH THIEU REMAINS IN POWER AND ALL SOUTH VIETNAMESE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A FREE ELECTION TO DETERMINE WHAT GOVERNMENT THEY WANT FOR THE FUTURE. THE RESULT OF THIS CHECK INDICATES THAT THEY WERE NOT ONLY UNANIMOUS BUT VEHEMENT IN STATING THEIR CONCLUSIONS THAT IF SAIGON IS THE ONLY ROADBLOCK FOR REACHING AGREEMENT ON THIS BASIS THEY WILL PERSONALLY LEAD THE FIGHT WHEN THE NEW CONGRESS RECONVENES ON JANUARY 3 TO CUT OFF ALL MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SAIGON. MY EVALUATION IS THAT THE DATE OF THE CUT-OFF WOULD BE FEBRUARY 1. THEY FURTHER BELIEVE THAT UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO IT ALONE AND TO MAKE A SEPARATE DEAL WITH NORTH VIETNAM FOR THE RETURN OF OUR POWS AND FOR OUR WITHDRAWAL.

THESE ARE MEN WHO HAVE LOYALLY SUPPORTED US ON NOVEMBER 3, CAMBODIA, LAOS AND MAY 8. THEY HAVE GREAT AFFECTION FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND GREAT RESPECT FOR PRESIDENT THIEU PERSONALLY, BUT THEY POINT OUT THAT THE VOTES IN THE SENATE THIS PAST YEAR FOR APPROPRIATIONS FOR SUPPORT OF THE EFFORT IN VIETNAM HAVE BEEN WON ONLY BY GREAT EFFORT AND BY VERY SMALL MARGINS. THEY ALSO POINT OUT THAT THIS TIME THE HOUSE CANNOT SAVE APPROPRIATIONS BECAUSE THE SENATE WOULD BLOCK ANY HOUSE MOVE TO RESTORE FUNDS WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, IN VIEW OF THE MAKEUP OF THE NEW HOUSE, IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, BY SIMPLY LETTING THE APPROPRIATIONS BILL DIE IN CONFERENCE.

THIS MESSAGE, UNLESS YOU HAVE STRONG FEELINGS OTHERWISE, SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY PASSED ON THROUGH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATORS TO THIEU. TELL HIM THE FAT IS IN THE FIRE. IT IS TIME TO FISH OR CUT BAIT. WE DO NOT WANT TO GO IT ALONE. I PERSONALLY WANT TO STAND BY THIEU AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT BUT AS I HAVE TOLD HIM IN THREE SEPARATE MESSAGES, WHAT REALLY COUNTS IS NOT THE AGREEMENT BUT MY DETERMINATION TO TAKE MASSIVE ACTION AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM IN THE EVENT THEY BREAK THE AGREEMENT. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN THE SOUTH MEAN ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN THAT EVENTUALITY. IF THEY HAD NO FORCES THERE AT ALL AND I REFUSED TO ORDER AIR RETALIATION ON THE NORTH WHT INFILTRATION STARTED TO BEGIN, THE WAR WOULD BE RESUMED AND THE OUTCOME WOULD BE VERY MUCH IN DOUBT.

YOU MUST TELL THIEU THAT I FEEL WE HAVE NOW REACHED THE CROSSROADS. WITHER HE TRUSTS ME AND SIGNS WHAT I HAVE DETERMINED IS THE BEST AGREEMENT WE CAN GET OR WE HAVE TO GO IT ALONE AND END OUR OWN INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR ON THE BEST TERMS WE CAN GET. I DO NOT GIVE HIM THIS VERY TOUGH OPTION BY PERSONAL DESIRE, BUT BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL REALITY IN THE UNITED STATES IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ME, EVEN WITH THE MASSIVE MANDATE I PERSONALLY RECEIVED IN THE ELECTION, TO GET THE SUPPORT FROM A HOSTILE CONGRESS TO CONTINUE THE WAR WHEN THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ON OCTOBER 8 OFFERED AN AGREEMENT WHICH WAS FAR BETTER THAN BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE BY RESOLUTION AND DIRECTIVE TO THE PRESIDENT DURING THIS LAST SESSION INDICATED THEY THOUGHT WE OUGHT TO ACCEPT.

TELL THIEU THAT I CANNOT KEEP THE LID ON HIS STRONG SUPPORTERS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE MUCH LONGER. THEY ARE TERRIBLY DISTURBED BY WHAT THEY READ AND HEAR OUT OF SAIGON. IT IS TIME FOR US TO DECIDE TO GO FORWARD TOGETHER OR TO GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS. IF WE GO SEPARATE WAYS, ALL THAT WE FOUGHT FOR, FOR SO MANY YEARS, WILL BE LOST. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, HE WILL JOIN US IN GOING FORWARD TOGETHER ON THE COURSE I HAVE LAID OUT WE CAN, OVER THE LONG PULL, WIN A VERY SIGNIFICANT VICTORY.

THE THIRD OPTION OF OUR TRYING TO CONTINUE TO GO FORWARD TOGETHER ON THE BASIS OF CONTINUING THE WAR IS SIMPLY NOT OPEN. THE DOOR HAS BEEN SLAMMED SHUT HARD AND FAST BY THE LONGTIME SUPPORTERS OF THE HARD LINE IN VIETNAM IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE WHO CONTROL THE PURSE STRINGS.

END OF MESSAGE

1/4/70

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